



Milwaukee County Board Chairwoman

 **MARCELIA NICHOLSON**

Milwaukee County Courthouse • 901 N. 9th Street, RM 201 • Milwaukee, WI 53233
(414) 278-4278 • marcelia.nicholson@milwaukeecountywi.gov
county.milwaukee.gov/nicholson

FALL 2021

District 5



Reflecting on My Time as Your Chairwoman

As the first Afro-Latina elected Chairperson to the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors, I welcome opportunities to share how Milwaukee County is working to propel our goal of racial and gender equity. I sat down with Fox 6 News Milwaukee (*pictured above*), and the Shepherd Express, to reflect on my time leading the Board as Chairwoman during a global pandemic.



Chats With the Chairwoman

This term I began a series of "Chats with the Chairwoman" events. Each month I focused on a different topic that included leaders in a panel discussion (*pictured above*). I was fortunate enough to host a panel full of incredible Black women and cultivate sound words of wisdom throughout the evening.

Dear Neighbor,

It is an honor to serve as your representative on the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors. I was born and raised in the 53206 zip-code and am a product of the Milwaukee Public Schools. This upbringing has really informed my work on behalf of county residents. It is my firm belief that local government has the power to improve our daily lives and transform communities.

When I was first elected Chairwoman of the Board by my peers in 2020, the cards were stacked against us as the Covid-19 pandemic quickly disrupted our daily lives. The horrific outcomes of this pandemic called upon all elected officials to dig deep and fight fiercely for our communities. As your County Board Supervisor, I pushed for legislation both at the State and County level which would put our people first.

I am proud to say that the work I initially produced in 2019, which led to the declaration of racism as a public health crisis, helped aid Milwaukee health officials' decision making throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. This work also encouraged various cities across the nation to follow our lead and declare racism a public health crisis and conduct more thoughtful audits of their racial equity efforts.

In both 2020 and 2021, I continued this push for more equitable changes throughout Milwaukee County by implementing new committees such as the Audit Committee and the Health Equity, Human Needs and Strategic Planning Committee. The creation of these committees has provided a clear cut lane for elected officials to review or create policies with racial and gender equity in mind. I, along with my colleagues, have accomplished a great deal and I encourage you to check out my legislative highlights enclosed in this newsletter for more details.

My office is always open to hear directly from the communities I serve, and I also encourage you to reach out whenever a new county or neighborhood issue arises. Together we can make Milwaukee the healthiest county in all of Wisconsin.

Sincerely,

Marcelia Nicholson

Marcelia Nicholson
Milwaukee County Board Chairwoman, District 5

Fighting for Milwaukee County Residents and Investing in Equity

This term Chairwoman Marcelia Nicholson successfully authored several pieces of legislation and led efforts that focus on Milwaukee County's vision to achieve equity and make Milwaukee County the healthiest in the state.

Promote Gender and Racial Equity

Chairwoman Nicholson authored a measure to honor Women's History Month and identify policy changes to help improve racial and gender equity for female employees. The measure focuses on how to encourage the retention of female employees given specific disparities, promote diversity, and understand how the COVID-19 pandemic affects Milwaukee County's female employees.

Greater Opportunities for All Future Leaders

Chairwoman Nicholson reimagined the County Board's Intern Program by creating paid internships with the intent of breaking the cycle of privilege where those with means have greater opportunities to become leaders. Unpaid intern positions are disproportionately available to those with higher socioeconomic statuses. The funding of these positions paves the way for a more equitable system for all students.

Addressing the Energy Burden

A study released this year by the Sierra Club reports major disparities in Milwaukee noting the energy burden of households in predominantly Black and Hispanic/Latinx neighborhoods is roughly double that of households in predominantly white neighborhoods. Chairwoman Nicholson led the effort to seek concrete policy options from the Milwaukee County Division on Housing to address this disparity.

A Call To Action Across the State

As a board member of the Wisconsin Counties Association, Chairwoman Nicholson called on the state and Wisconsin counties to join Milwaukee County in working toward positive changes to eliminate systemic poverty and inequality.



I was thrilled to be invited to present at the 2021 Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) Annual Conference, where I discussed governing through a racial equity lens and how to make positive organizational changes.

Juneteenth Celebration

This year marked the 50th Juneteenth Celebration for Milwaukee and it was a huge success! It was so inspiring to see so many elected officials and constituents celebrate Black liberation. Seeing their joy further affirmed the importance of making Juneteenth a major holiday for county employees, which we were able to accomplish at the County Board. I was also proud to present a Citation on behalf of the County Board Black Caucus that commended all Milwaukee residents for continuing the legacy of Juneteenth.



Swearing-in Ceremony

The 2020-2022 term of the Milwaukee County Board started after the declaration of a global pandemic and national emergency, so Supervisors were sworn into office in a socially distanced parking lot. This summer, with increasing vaccination rates, the public was invited to a ceremonial swearing-in at the Marcus Center.



Pride Month Kickoff

To celebrate the beginning of Pride Month, I joined Mayor Tom Barrett, County Executive David Crowley, Common Council President Cavalier Johnson, and Alderman Robert Bauman at the unveiling of the MCTS Pride Bus.



Recognizing Black Nite Brawl Day

Chairwoman Nicholson authored a resolution declaring August 5, 2021 as Black Nite Brawl Day in Milwaukee County. Black Nite Brawl marked the first a fierce defense of LGBTQ spaces in Wisconsin by people of color during a time when very few safe and celebratory places existed for people identifying as LGBTQ in Milwaukee. The resolution calls on the Milwaukee County Historical Society to honor the site of the Black Nite Brawl as a historical monument and to allow the installation of a memorial marker.

Fighting for Environmental Justice and Keeping our Parks Beautiful

Keeping District 5 Parks Clean

I was happy to host a park clean-up at Washington Park this past Spring (photo left), as well as honor 21 Parks Department staff for their incredible contributions to keeping our parks beautiful during the Covid-19 pandemic (photo right). Our County Parks are an integral part of our neighborhoods and together we can keep them clean for everyone. Thank you to everyone who came to volunteer their time and to all Park staff across Milwaukee County.



Climate Action 2050

Chairwoman Nicholson authored a resolution making it the policy of Milwaukee County to achieve net zero carbon emissions in all county facilities and operations while advancing equity, justice, and community resilience. Climate change is the greatest existential threat of our time and will have a disparate impact on communities of color. This ambitious goal of achieving net zero carbon emissions will help ensure Milwaukee County does its part to protect both the environment and our citizens.

Clean Waterways

Chairwoman Nicholson reintroduced a measure that reinforces Milwaukee County's commitment to sustainable practices through the reduction or elimination of single-use plastics and foam products in county facilities. The measure helps promote clean waterways as plastic debris make up a significant volume of pollution that enters the Great Lakes each year.

Bucks Win

As Milwaukee slowly began opening up and returning to a bit of normalcy, our Bucks gave us a historic win as the 2021 NBA Champions, as well as a chance to come together. We all put on for our city and that feeling of closeness will stay with me forever.





MILWAUKEE COUNTY BOARD CHAIRWOMAN

 **MARCELIA NICHOLSON**

Milwaukee County Courthouse, Room 201 • 901 N. 9th St., Milwaukee, WI 53233

(414) 278-4278 • marcelia.nicholson@milwaukeecountywi.gov • county.milwaukee.gov/nicholson

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MILWAUKEE, WI
PERMIT 500

Chairwoman Gets Her Covid-19 Vaccine

I was excited to take the lead with County Executive Crowley and Common Council President Johnson in getting our Covid-19 vaccines. We stood together to show everyone the importance of not only putting our health first, but to also take the necessary measures to keep everyone around us safe and healthy as well. For more info on COVID vaccines visit:

county.milwaukee.gov/COVID-19



Get up-to-date information on FREE
Milwaukee County Attractions at:



county.milwaukee.gov/freedays

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Task Force

Chairwoman Marcelia Nicholson worked to create a Task Force that can review and recommend how to allocate money received from the Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Milwaukee County's share of ARPA funds total about \$183.7 million. Chairwoman Nicholson envisioned the ARPA Task Force to promote a thorough review of allocations with engagement from community stakeholders.

The pandemic has had a disparate impact on people of color, including relief efforts and vaccine distribution, which Milwaukee County can help rectify through an equitable distribution of its federal funding. According to guidance released by the U.S. Department of the Treasury, ARPA funds may be used to:

- **Support public health expenditures**, such as COVID-19 mitigation efforts, medical expenses, behavioral healthcare and certain public health and safety staff
- **Address negative economic impacts** caused by the public health emergency, including economic harms to workers, households, small businesses, impacted industries and the public sector
- **Replace lost public sector revenue**, using this funding to provide government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue experienced due to the pandemic
- **Provide premium pay for essential workers**, offering additional support to those who have borne and will bear the greatest health risks because of their service in critical infrastructure sectors
- **Invest in water, sewer and broadband infrastructure**, making necessary investments to improve access to clean drinking water, support vital wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, and to expand access to broadband internet

YOUR FEEDBACK IS WELCOME! You can provide input on how Milwaukee County prioritizes millions of dollars in ARPA funds by visiting county.milwaukee.gov/ARPA.taskforce and submitting your feedback.



IMPACT 2-1-1 is a central access point for people in need. During times of personal crisis or community disaster, the free, confidential helpline and online resource directory make it easy for residents to get connected to information and assistance. **Simply dial 2-1-1.** If you want detailed information please go to: www.impactinc.org/impact-2-1-1.